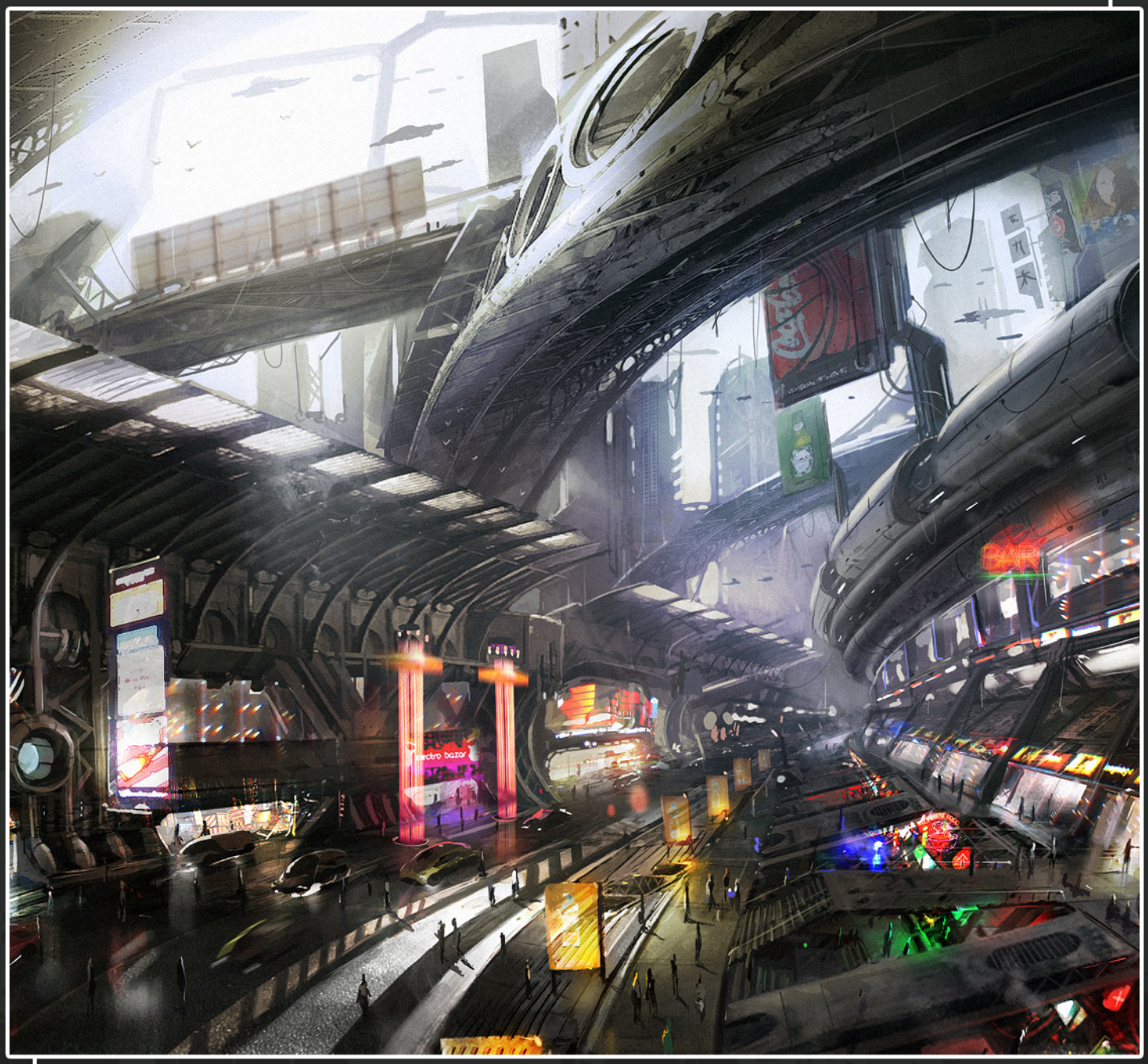
3DTOTAL'S GUIDE TO PAINTING

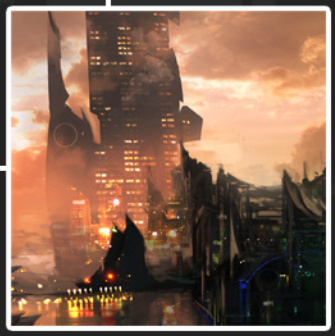
FUTURISTIC CITIES













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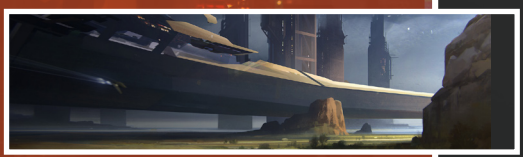
Chapter 03 | Slum City
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WEALTHY CITY





04

Big changes, I start carving up the larger planes with detail. This is all made up and hand done with a simple round brush. The image is starting to form now. (**Fig.04**)

Let there be light! I overlaid some more photos to start making it look like the night scene I was imagining. You might think it's "cheating" but these are all tipped in perspective to conform to my vanishing points. You always have to do this because rarely do you get a photo that perfectly conforms to your painting. I use Free Transform and Perspective with the keyboard shortcut Command T. This brings up whichever function I need. Perspective and Free Transform being the most used.(**Fig.05a and Fig.05b**)

Cleaned up some edges and added the street lights for scale. Make one and duplicate then repeat. Free transform again for size and perspective. I also started adding some more



05b

05a

complex frames to my lit windows on the right. Again, and I cannot say this enough, the photo will only get you so far. You've got to be an artist and get in there and change it to suit your design! This is the skill that separates the photo collage artist's from the rest. Everyone does it but with the best you can't tell where the reference ends and the overpaint begins. (**Fig.06**)

People! It was always my intention to have people milling about. I made 3 different custom brushes that I used to quickly populate the ground.(**Fig.07a** and **Fig.07b**)

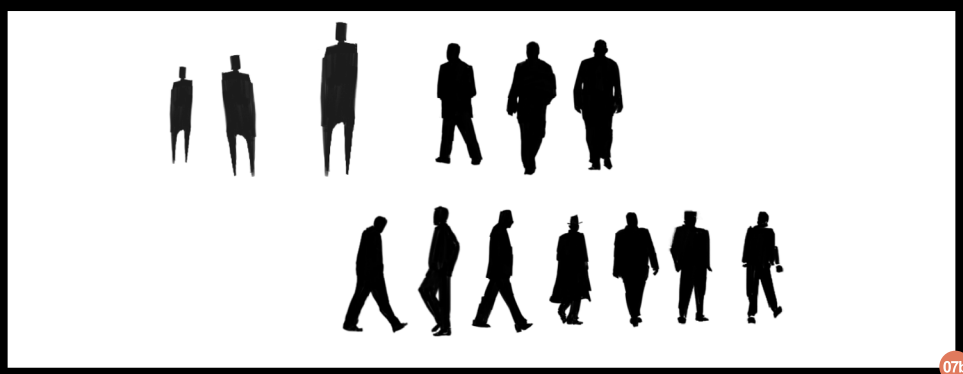
Some subtle lighting emanating from the dome in the distance adds a little more "coolness". (**Fig.08**)

I then add more detail to the mid ground structures on the left. I'm bringing shapes forward, defining slight overhangs, adding lights to the side plane. It needs all these small touches to bring it to life. (**Fig.09**)

Added a lot more drawing to the lower right structure and some clouds to obscure the tops of the buildings on the left. It wasn't the focal point so a few soft edges will keep the eye from wandering off the page. Signed and done. I consider this a sketch so I only take it so far. (**Fig.10**)


06


07a


07b

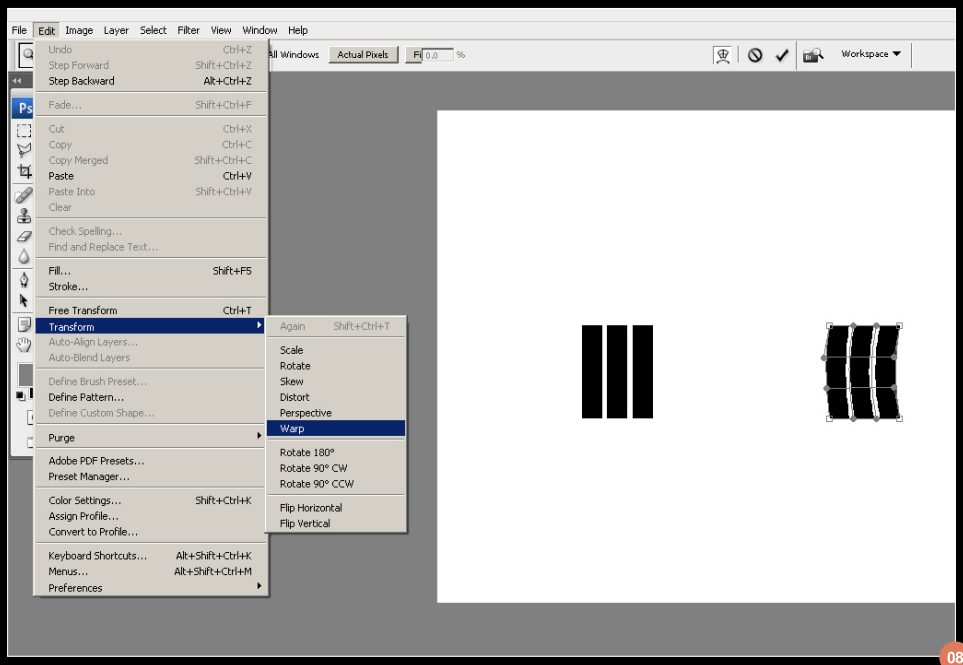

08


09

with some structures on the deck and rigging. I added in some shapes that could become crates or platforms but at this stage I was not sure.

When painting in symmetrical detail along the hull it is best to create some shapes on a new layer and then use the Transform tools to match the perspective. Scale and Skew are the two common ones I use but Warp was particularly useful in this instance due to the curvature of the hull.

Fig.08 shows the Transform tools under Edit and in this case "Warp" which has been used to curve the vents along the side of the ship. I made one group first and after duplicating it twice used the "Scale" and "Skew" tools in conjunction with the perspective grid. Once done I then warped each set individually to align with the hull.



08

At this stage I began looking through some of the free photos available at 3D Total which I could use to paste into the image and help add a sense of realism. Photos which are carefully used and color corrected can help an image immensely and suggest all kinds of textural detail and subtle effects.

Whilst sifting through the library I found these two photos which caught my eye. I imagined them fitting somewhere and so dragged them into my image, scaled them and started to experiment.

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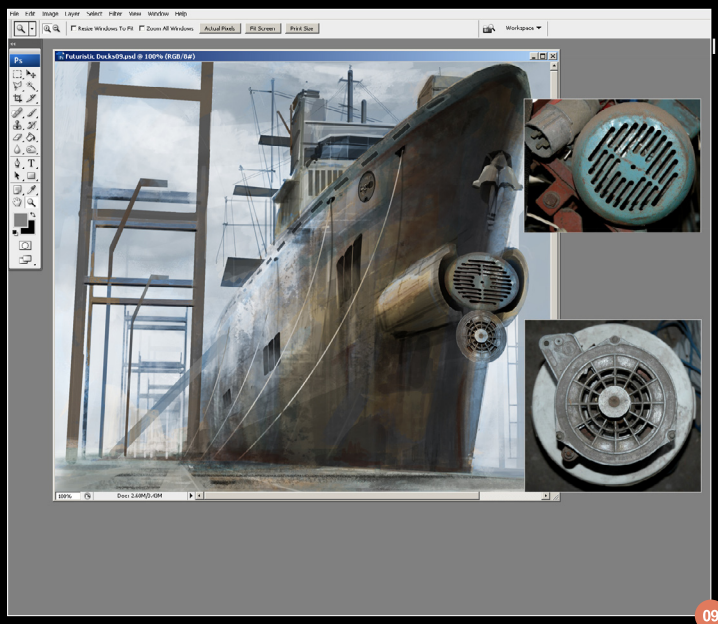
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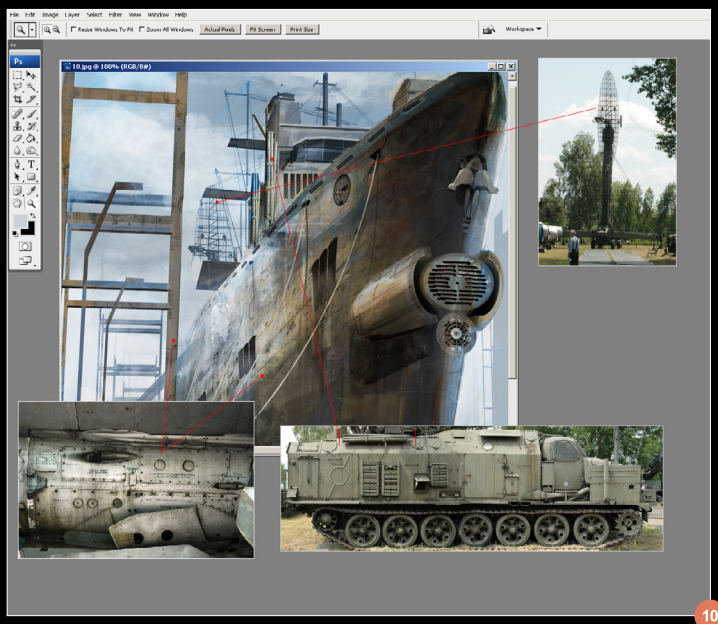
I finally decided that they looked quite interesting at the bow and fitted in with the vents so skewed them accordingly and blended them in using Image – Adjustments (**Fig.09**).

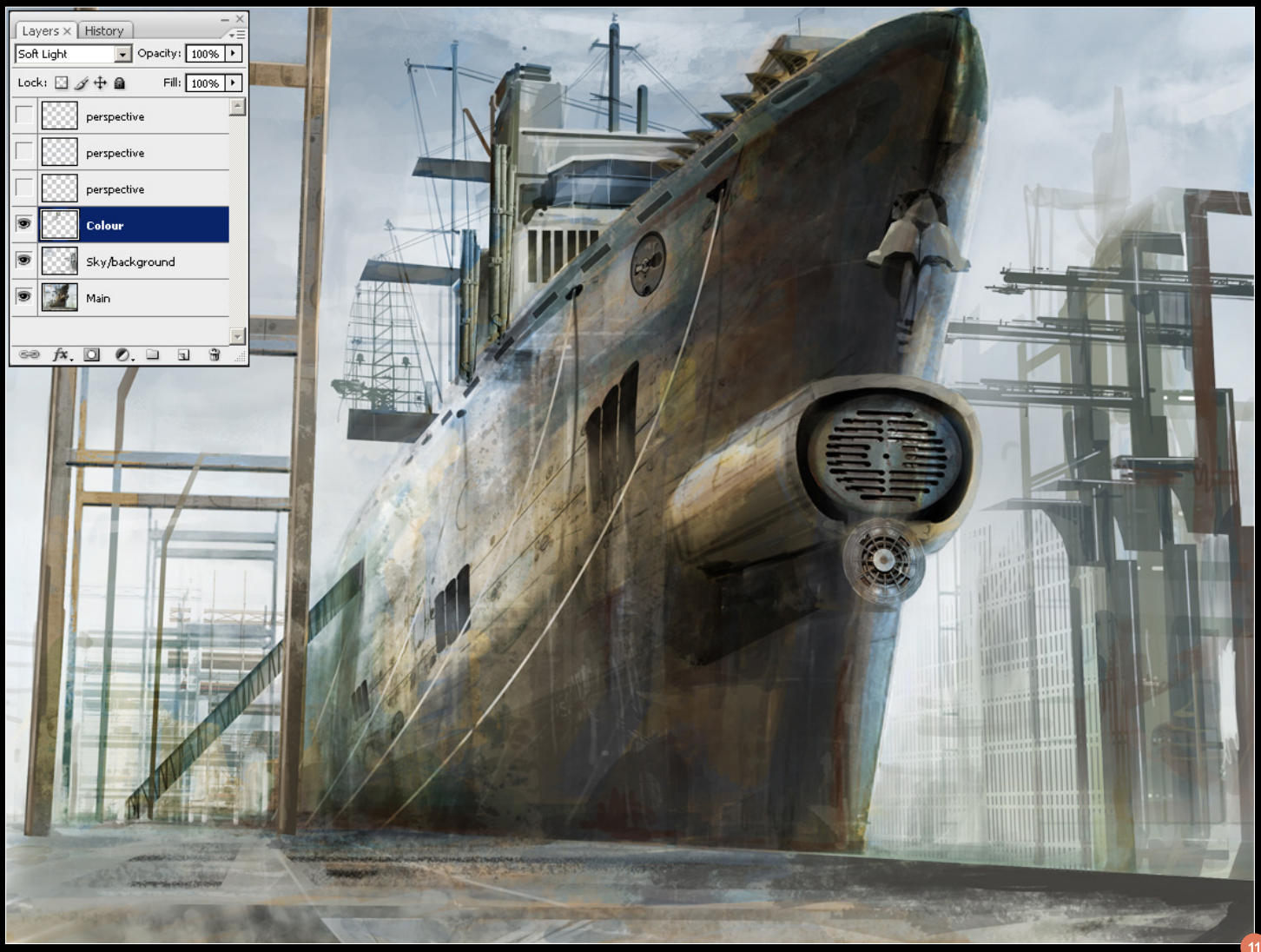
found a few other useful references in the library which I used to add further detail and realism to the image. I copied and pasted in some aircraft panelling along the hull and on the girders on the left and set the blending mode to Soft Light (**Fig.10**).

The other two components taken from the radar and tank were simply colour corrected and set to Normal blending mode.

http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/preview.php?imi=7128&s=c:Vehicle_Air&p=0&cid=15


09


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11



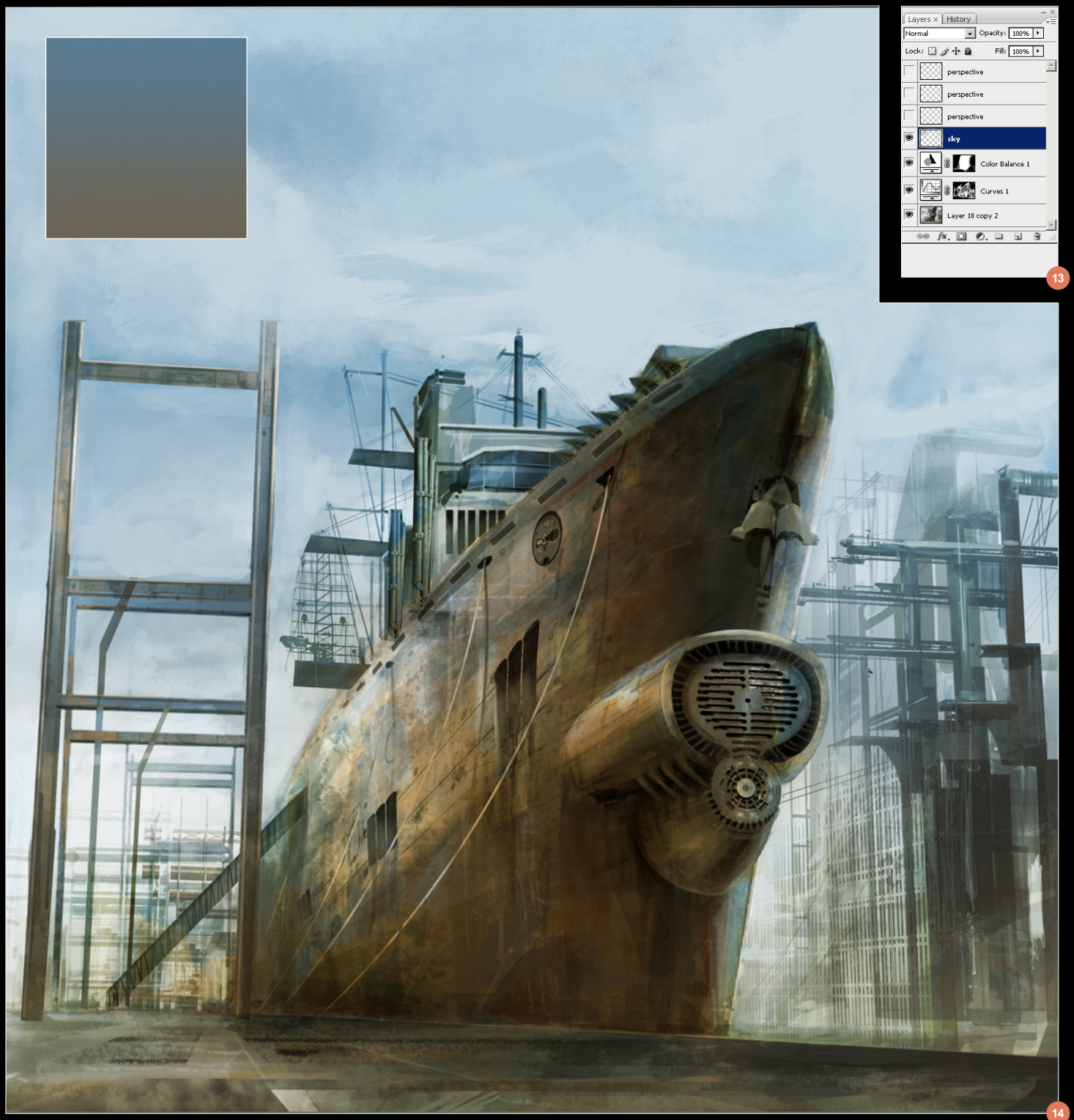
12

http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/preview.php?imi=7191&s=c:Vehicle_Ground&p=1&cid=15

http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/preview.php?imi=7195&s=c:Vehicle_Ground&p=1&cid=15

After all of the detail that has been added from photos I decided to flatten many of the layers to keep the file from getting too complicated. These have now been merged with both the color and original tonal layer (inset top left – **Fig.11**).

The background on the right is looking a little empty and so I created an abstract shape that could represent a large crane or something and then duplicated it twice before scaling it to match the perspective. I kept this on a separate layer



13

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for the time being as well as adding a new color layer set to Soft Light to change the hue of the top of the boat which was too blue.

With a little more refinement to the background and a better integration of the vents on the front of the ship I once again flattened all of the layers barring the perspective ones. I then added two Adjustment Layers: Curves to darken everything slightly and Color balance to add some warmer tones towards yellow (**Fig.12**).

You can see the layer structure here with the Adjustment layers and a further sky layer which I used to add a blue mainly to the upper left (**Fig.13**).

Refining

At this point the detail in the image was at a reasonable stage however the color scheme seemed a little drab and washed out; fine for a foggy day but not what I had in mind. The composition was also troubling me



15



16

because the ship seemed squashed and had no space to breath so to speak. I altered the canvas size by increasing the height and also added a Gradient layer set to Overlay using the colors in the small inset upper left. I then used a soft edged eraser to delete certain sections that coincided with the ship (**Fig.14**).



17

This area of space above the ship helps balance the composition which I feel is much better. With this new injection of color I started to build on the level of detail on both the ship and background (**Fig.15**).

I continued adding further refinements to both the background and foreground. Small highlights on some of the ships detail can make a big difference overall and the panels along the lower side of the hull have now been warped to better match the curve (Fig.16).

A gigantic building in the background helped add some extra interest along with a spaceship flying over the docks (Fig.17).

Some lamps and a character placed in the foreground completed the image and with a few more embellishments the picture was complete.

Richard Tilbury

For more from this artist visit

http://www.richardtilburyart.com/

or contact them at

ibex80@hotmail.com



So as promised earlier, I'm continuing to fiddle with the composition. I've also decided to start bringing in some of the human charm, placing a neon sign to the left, it'll be some sort of a one man fish shop being run from a junk heap of machinery. Actually it looks like two turbines … well whatever, I like it (**Fig.07**).



07

Currently I am trying to keep my lighting focused to the centre right; hopefully this will continue...

Here there is further cleaning up, and additional colors added. I get rid of the foreground tunnel. I think it did a good job of adding depth and some dynamic, but I feel that I need to expose the courtyard to some sky otherwise it feels a little too depressing. It's difficult to stick with your initial ideas sometimes; I was appreciating that tunnel, but I just couldn't make it seem somehow more uplifting than an open sky (even if it is now populated by two fat silos) (**Fig.08**).



08

So what would a seedy part of town be without at least one billboard of a scantily clad female?! In this case, since it's the future, it's a scantily clad hologram of a female. Bask in the sweet progress of technology (**Fig.09**).



09

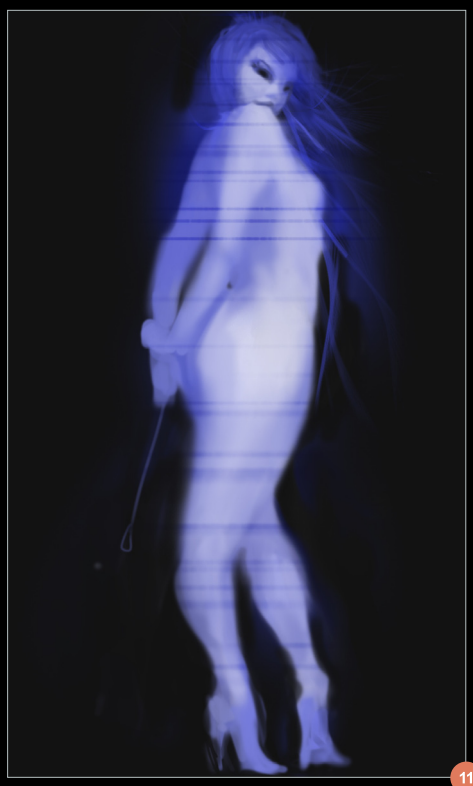
I've outlined in separate thumbnails the breakdown of how I decide to paint her.

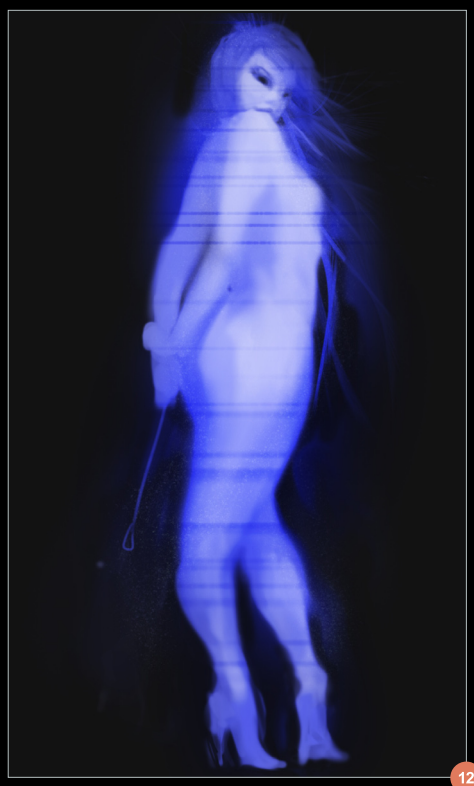
First I start with an off-blue, white and semi hard Airbrush. I want to make her look provocative but not straight up slutty (**Fig.10**) .

Now, on an underlying layer, I sketch out some flowing hair, erasing it out a bit just to make it feel a little sketchy. On an overlay layer I make some broken up diagonal lines, I'm hoping these will sufficiently indicate the kind of holographic images we're all familiar with - the ones that are kind of grainy and all broken up by static (**Fig.11**).

And then on a new top layer set to overlay I add the final glow, really saturating the blue, making it glow (**Fig.12**).


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There you have it. Later on I might go in and further punch up the brightness, but that's still to be seen depending on how the piece develops. I didn't take very long on her; didn't want her feeling to well refined, I think it might work against the holographic sort of airy feel I'm going for.

I decide to accentuate the girl with some neon lights, trying to establish a mood here of entertainment as well, even if it might be seedy entertainment (Fig.13).

Also I add "John" to John's Fish Emporium. Little human beings can really bring life to a piece. Use them wisely though. They can also detract from a finished environment, if they draw the viewer's attention more than the environment itself does.

Finally, I'm defining the back buildings, making them slant in so as to give a feeling that they're pressing down upon us.

Okay, now I add some smaller detail and add haze to the "Entertainment District" simply by bringing the Airbrush's opacity to 20% and choosing a soft edge. Then feel free to glaze to your heart's content until you think you've established enough of an atmosphere (**Fig.14**).

I use this same process for bringing in the smoke emanating from the tenements, except this time I raise the opacity to 60%. I feel the smoke drives the point home that these buildings are lived in. It reminds me of cooking and the aromas that accompany such memories, which will hopefully allow the viewer to relate to the piece better and make it more tangible for them. The smoke also allows for a greater sense of atmosphere.

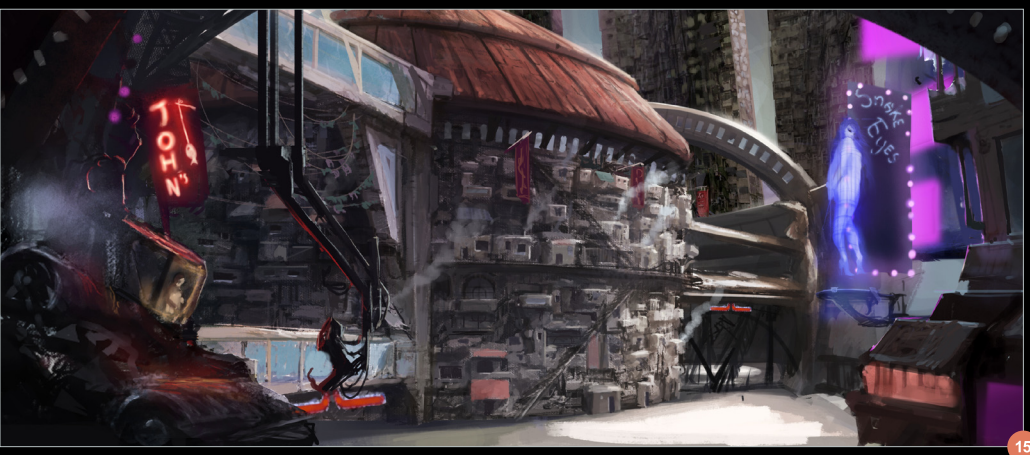


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Finally, I use the black and white collage from **Fig.03** and apply it liberally to the background skyscrapers, using the same method as before. I then paint it further after dropping the layer down, making them look rundown but structured.



15

Okay, Now I've transferred over to Photoshop CS4, mainly because when it comes to many layers I find Photoshop handles the load better than Corel Painter. On the other hand, I do feel that Corel Painter is superior at mimicking the visceral qualities of traditional mediums, so yes they really do have their own pros and cons. It's up to you to decide which better works for you (Fig.15).

Anyhow, time for a little more charm… in the form of a giant metallic arm!

Not sure what exactly it is but I want to bring some quirky menace into the piece, so I throw this arm coming off top of the screen to visit John's Fish Emporium. I make sure it's reflecting the light from all of the surrounding sources well enough to stick out. Things are getting rather cluttered and it's becoming a balancing act between detail and clarity for me.

I also include happy patrons at John's; obviously one of them has seen the arm, but whether or not he's ridged like that because he's pooping

himself with fear or if in fact he's simply resentful of the machine's sterile coldness, we'll never know.

It's easy enough to bring drama even to a small scale like this when you utilize harsh lights and shadows. A much grandeur example of this can be found in Baroque paintings where sometimes the greatest of tension was caught by just using one light source appropriately and letting the rest be enveloped by dark shadows. A great example of this is Caravaggio, the tennis-playing-ruffian-master-painter.

I further spruce up the lights around the hologram (same technique as before - Overlay or Soft light layer on top and paint!)

I also forgot to mention this earlier, but I added some purple lights to the left of the screen as well, to tie in the two sides of the painting a little better. It's a simple technique if you feel your piece isn't unifying well.

I refine the background buildings by creating a simple repeating square pattern and overlaying it over the shapes of the sky scrapers. Then I choose the option Lock Transparent Pixels from the top of the Layers window in PS. This constricts me to paint only within the shapes I have on that particular layer. In this case, I can now paint right into the windows but can't paint outside of their borders (**Fig.16**) .

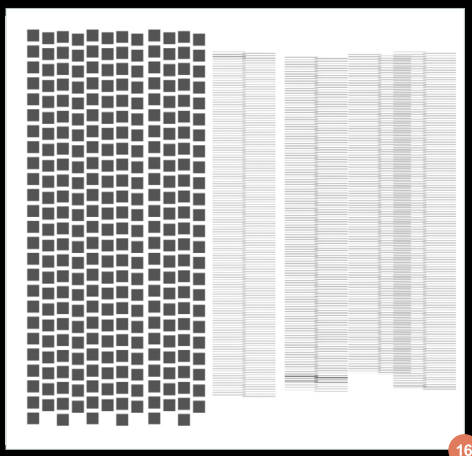
So now it's all refinement. I paint in much more of the populace, making sure to give them shadows to ground them. Of course I have to include flying transports because in the future you always have to have flying cars; it's a staple (**Fig.17**).

Also, I decide to make the metallic arm more of a figure; creepier like that.

I also change the buildings on the right because I'm thinking they're too cluttered so I simplify them and give the suggestion of a window.

The final significant phase for this piece is to create a new layer, make sure it's on the top of all of the mid-ground layers and, using the Airbrush tool at about 15% opacity and a soft edge, glaze over the mid-ground with yellows and oranges to give it some atmosphere and help further divide it from the foreground.

Following that it's just a case of continuing with minor refinements until I arrived to the finished work you see here!



16

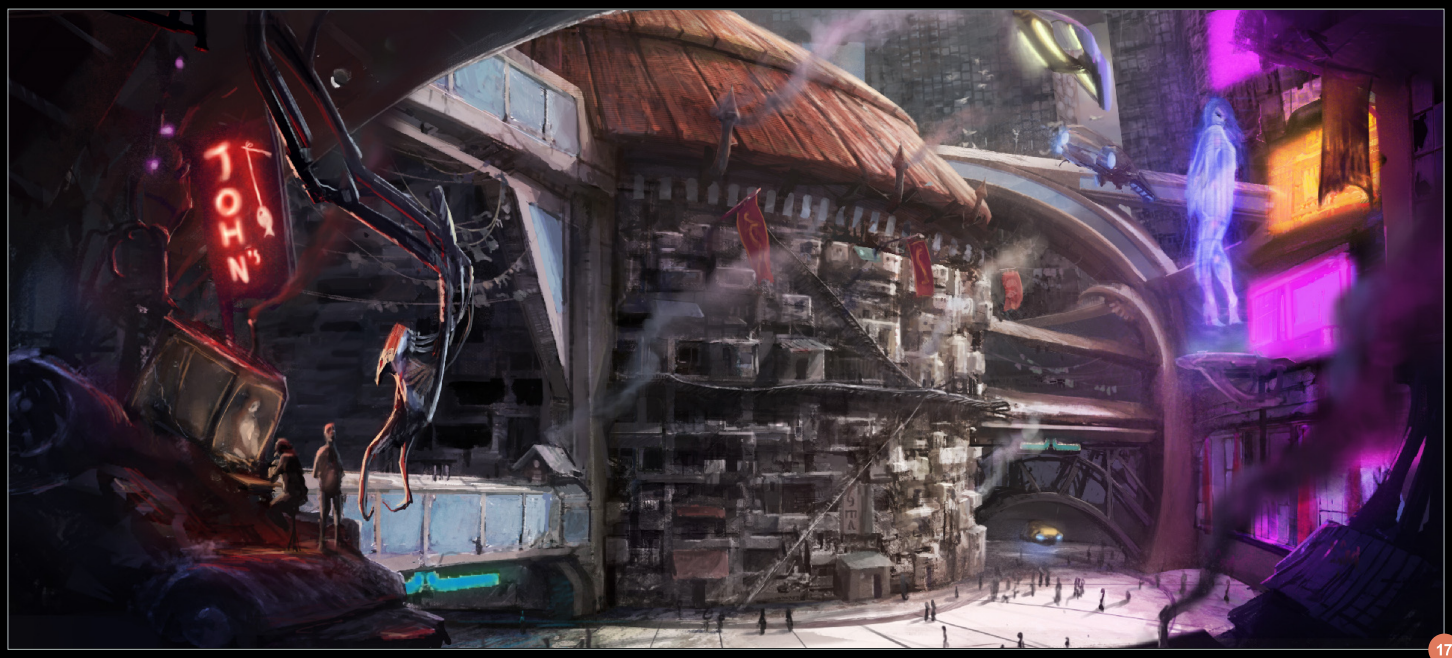
I suppose this about wraps it up folks. The piece is resolved well enough. It tells a story and hopefully is engaging enough to hold the viewer's attention for at least a few seconds.

There's still some other things I'd like to do to it, but isn't that always the case?

Anyhow, hope you enjoyed and if you have any questions feel free to drop me a line. Beaming out!

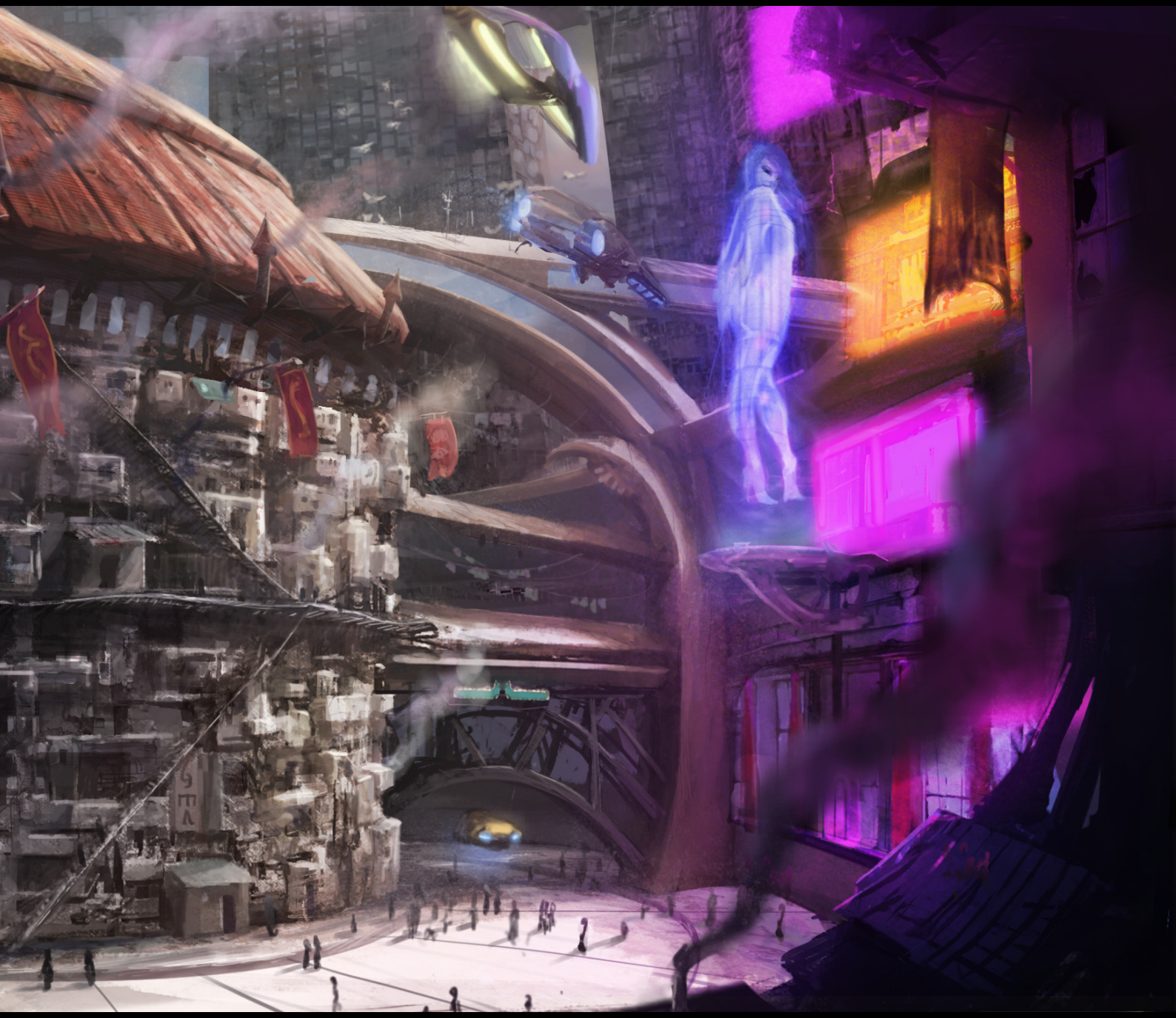
Branko Bistrovic

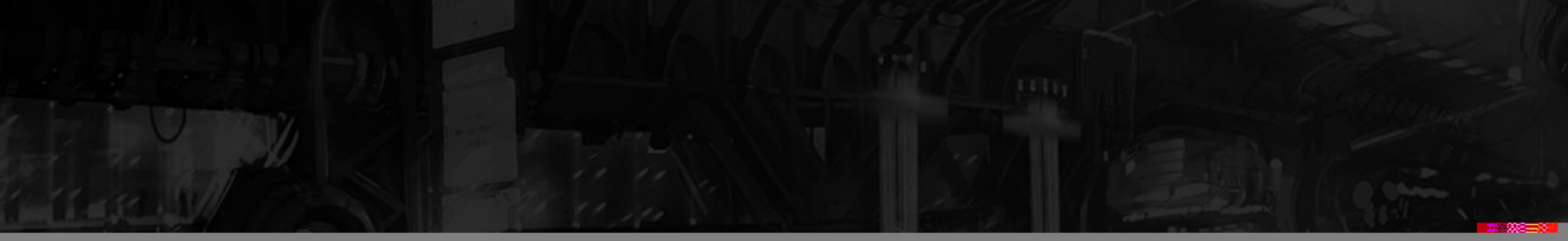
For more from this artist visit:
http://www.brushdreams.com/brankosfurnace.swf
Or contact them at:
bisvic@gmail.com



17

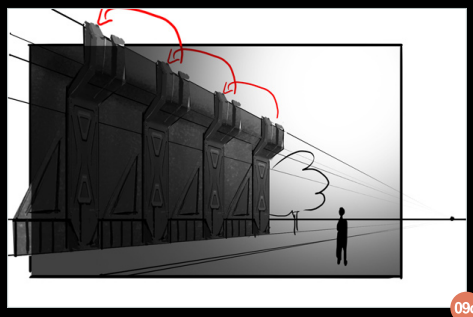

JOHN'S





BAZZAR / INDOOR MARKET PLACE

CHAPTER 04

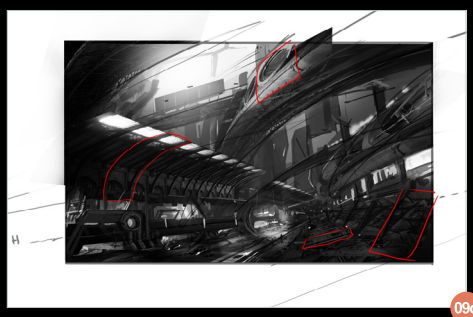

09c

Step 3: When steps 1 and 2 are done, place the mouse cursor on the left superior angle of the frame that contains the texture, and press Shift + Alt to move the texture to the left, while pressing both mouse buttons. This way we can repeat the same previously drawn texture and transfer it, keeping its perfect form and perspective (**Fig.09C**).

I've noted the areas where I used this technique with red marks in my drawing (**Fig.09d**).

Color

To give color to the image I distinguished each element step by step, by using color contrast. Sky on the one hand, the street and the buildings on the other. Light is always an important element (**Fig.10**).

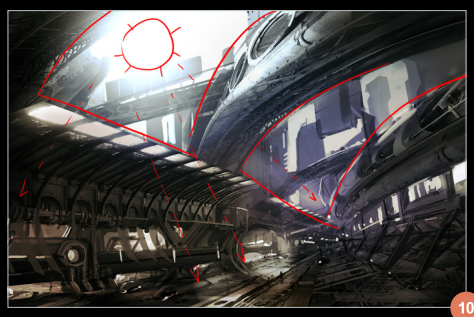

09d

Windows

Here I will show you step-by-step how to get "glowing window" effect by using textures.

Step 1: To get a realistic effect, draw rectangles on each building, using only one color (**Fig.11a**).

Step 2: Place a texture over this color. It can be taken from any photograph where light can be seen through a window. Then place the photo in the windows area and select the Linear light option from the Layers flap (**Fig.11b**).


10

Step 3: To light the window even more, use an almost white yellow color and create a new layer. Paint it with using the Overlay option (**Fig.11c**).

Posters

Step 1: Draw a poster, or some kind of rectangular, square or circular surface.

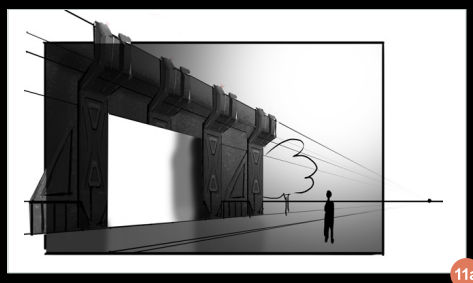
Step 2: Texture it with a photograph or something that will attract attention. So that it fits on the image well use the image on Overlay (**Fig.12**).

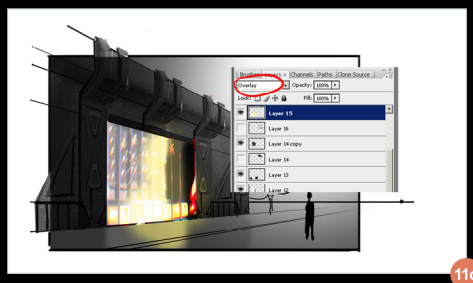
Conclusion

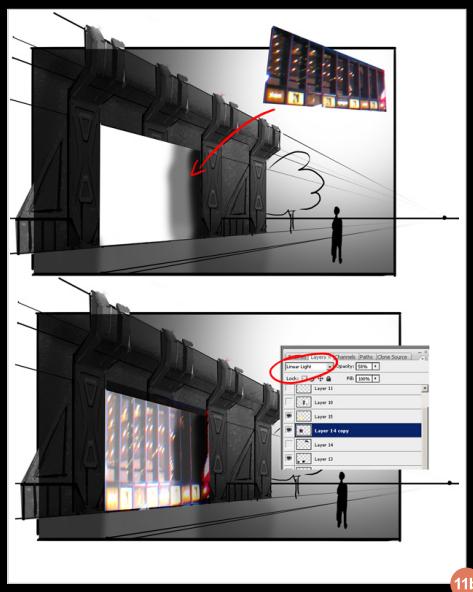
When it comes to making work for a client or to sell, knowing how to compose the image and use perspective correctly makes a big difference.

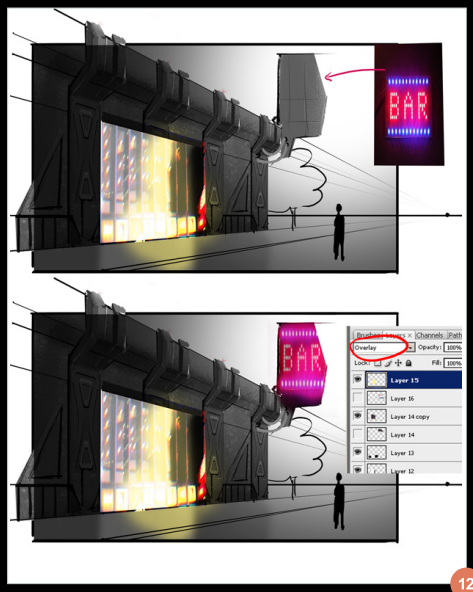
It is very difficult for me to tell you step-by-step how I created the final image. If I had to, I think it would be very tedious for readers, so I did my best to explain the most important steps. The search for ideas, composition and perspective were crucial to create an interesting image. I hope you have liked this tutorial and can benefit from it.

To have good ideas is what really matters.


11a


11c


11b



12

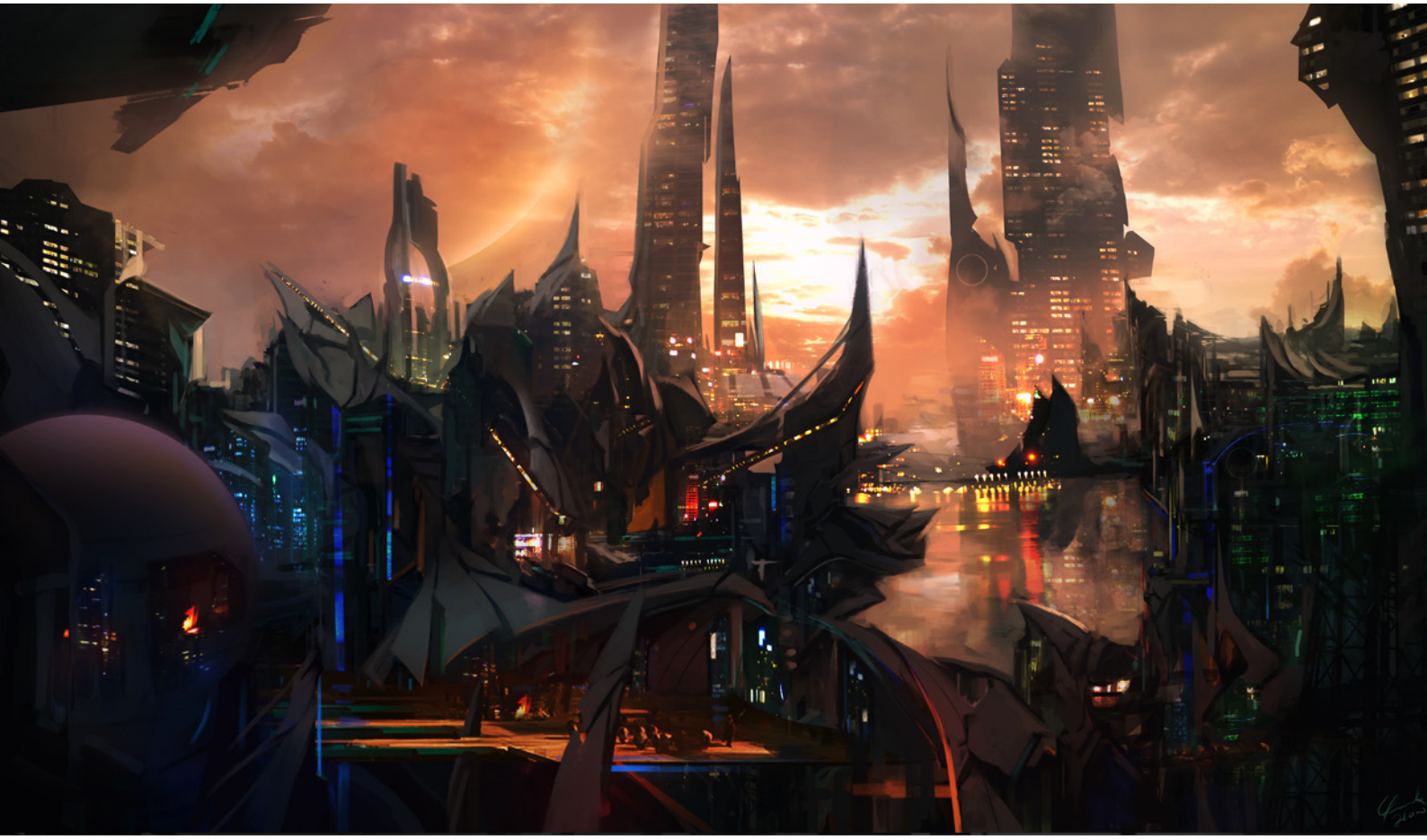
Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

For more from this artist visit:
http://www.ignaciobazanart.com/
Or contact them at:
i.bazanlazcano@gmail.com


electro bazar


BAR

CITY AT SUNSET



CHAPTER 05

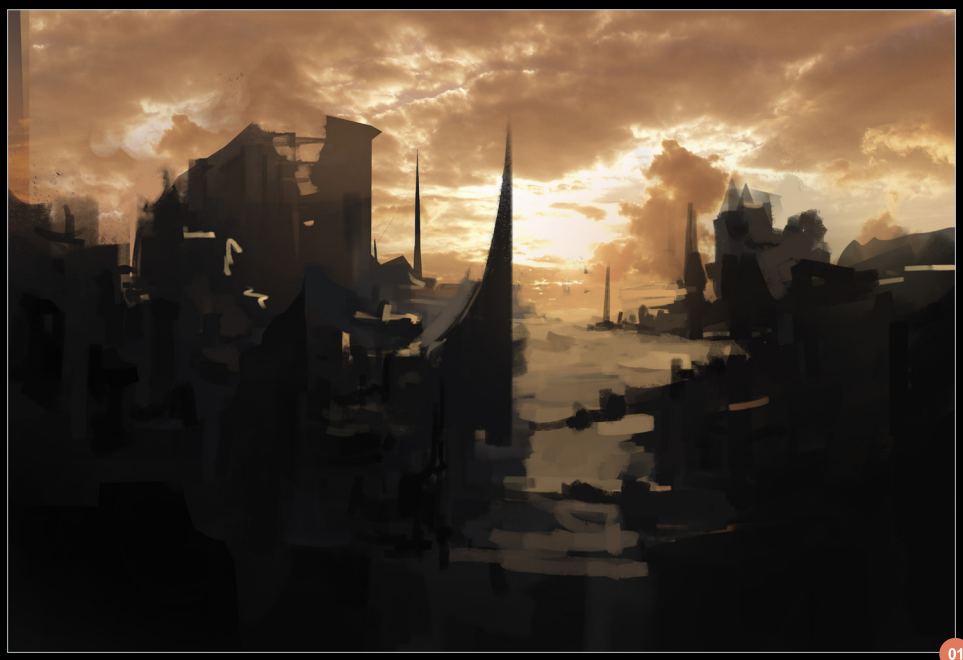
City at Sunset

Software used: Photoshop

Introduction

Painting a sci-fi cityscape at sunset can be challenging. There are a few aspects I have to focus on for this image: the design, lighting, and composition. For sci-fi pictures there is almost no limit to the architectural designs and this allows the exploration of some really interesting shapes and designs, but it's also important to keep the structures believable and appealing.

A cityscape at sunset means I have to carefully control the lighting so that it works for me. When the sun is low and near to the horizon, the sunlight becomes filtered and adds a fantastic warm mood to the environment. I decided to take advantage of this and compose an image that has high contrast between the background and the foreground.



01

Preparing the Scene

I start this piece by preparing an image of the sky. I want to create a sunset cityscape with high value contrast; so I use an image of the sky which gives me a good sense of the light direction and brightness. I use curves to make a reddish yellow, simulating the color of a sky at sunset. I then position it higher in the scene so my horizon line is somewhere in the middle.



02

Blocking In

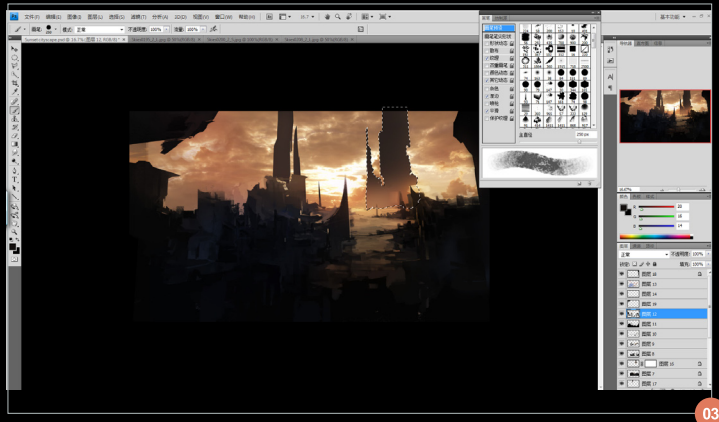
With a large Opaque brush I start to block in shapes for the cityscape. I want to create a futuristic cityscape with interesting shapes and high-rise buildings. The shapes I'm using are very hard-edged and spiky. I will roughly paint in some silhouettes to indicate the structures and try to find an interesting composition (**Fig.01**).

Composition

I decide to tweak the composition and move the focal point slightly to the right; I use the Free-Transform tool for this (**Fig.02**). I continue to adapt the composition by filling in the left side of the image. I use the Polygon-Selection tool to create selections of various shapes, then fill it in with a Hard brush (**Fig.03**). This technique gives some really sharp edges on the corners of the buildings.

Depth Establishment

I widen the image for a broader viewing angle, and continue to make corrections to the composition. I add in the two large buildings in the background to establish depth in the piece (**Fig.04**). The left and right buildings in the foreground act as cropping elements; I use this to make the image tighter. Cropping the image with shapes will give the viewer a more focused overall feel, leading the viewer's eyes into the image.



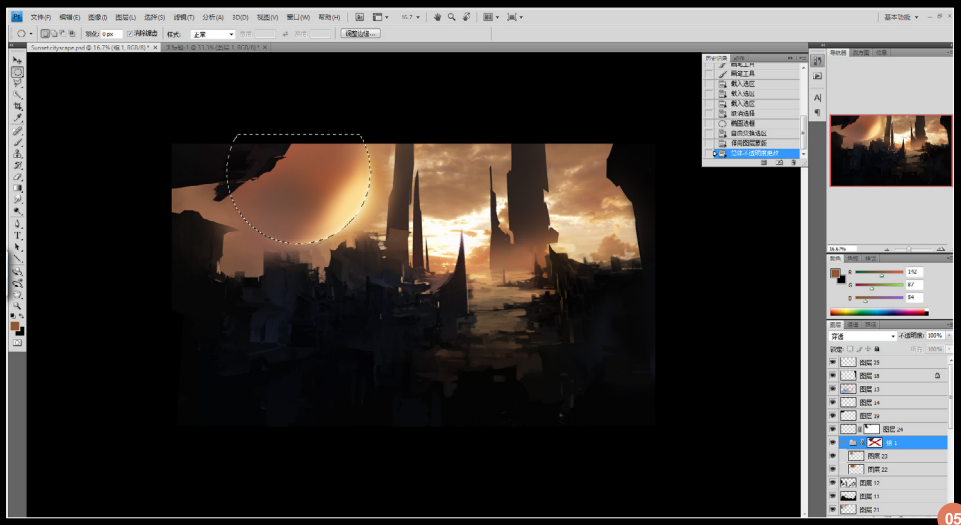
03



04

The Planet

I start to paint in a hazy planet in the far background by adding a rim of light (**Fig.05**). This gives the image an alien setting and again, adds depth to the composition.


05

Buildings in Mid-ground

Now with the composition mostly in place, I start to layer the buildings into the cityscape mid-ground (**Fig.06**). I will keep the light direction in mind when I define the buildings. Because of the strong back light established in the image, most of the buildings will only catch highlights on the top and the side facing the light. Most surfaces that face the camera won't have direct lighting, so I will keep them dark and work on the rim. I work mostly with a solid Hard Edge brush for this piece. I have the pressure set to Flow, so that it gives me enough control over the blending and provides a really fast and opaque rendering (**Fig.07**).

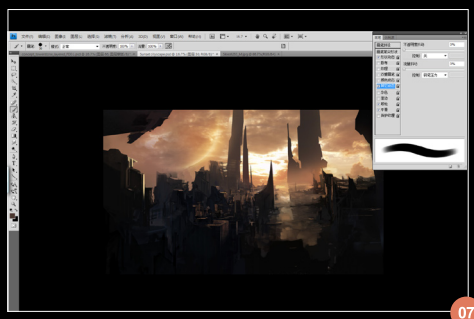

06

Building Details

It takes some time to define the mid-ground buildings in detail. Under limited lighting conditions it's important not to over expose the buildings, generally keeping it darker than the light source in the background. I also decide to add a secondary color in the image, something that work as an accent to contrast the overall red hue of the image (**Fig.08**).

Adjustments

I start to make some overall adjustments to the painting. First I use a curve Adjustment layer to filter all my painted layers. By tweaking the red channel, I am able to add more red to the highlights, while keeping the shadows relatively blue in contrast (**Fig.09**). Then I switch to a Soft Edged brush, and start to blend some of the elements together in the background. This helps to produce a softer image, and makes it look more natural.


07


08


09

Reconstruction

I find the structures in the painting too cubic and repetitive, so I decide to reconstruct the mid and foreground, adding a lot more circular forms and sci-fi looking structures to break up the boring buildings (**Fig.10**).

Tuning the Buildings

After the major change in the buildings, I start to look for repetition in the shapes. In order to tune down the chaotic structures in the painting and make them look like they belong, I carefully establish some repetition between the foreground, mid-ground, and background (**Fig.11**).

City Lights

In this step, I'm going to bring the cityscape alive with neon lights and windows (**Fig.12**). I crop parts from a photo of a city at night and take advantage of the Color Dodge layer to create this effect. After I have copied and pasted a section from a photo, I use the Curves editor to darken the shadows, so that only the windows will show up in the image (**Fig.13**). Then I switch the layer blending mode to Color Dodge; this will allow a very nice glow from just the bright windows and eliminate any black areas in the photo.

To the Finish

Before calling this piece finished, I make some adjustments to refine the foreground elements, adding repeating shapes and trying to tie the image together overall (**Fig.14**). I use a horizontal platform to help break up shapes in the foreground, adding depth and definition.

I continue to fine-tune the windows and lights. I add some clouds and mists for layering and with that I'm going to call this piece done! Thank you for reading, and I hope this tutorial helped you understand the process of creating a sci-fi cityscape at sunset. Best of luck! (**Fig.15**).

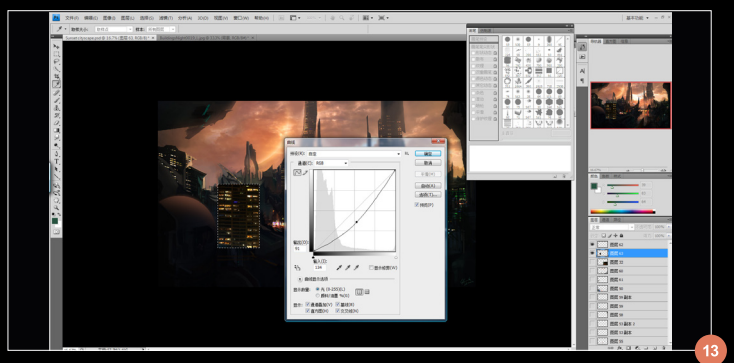
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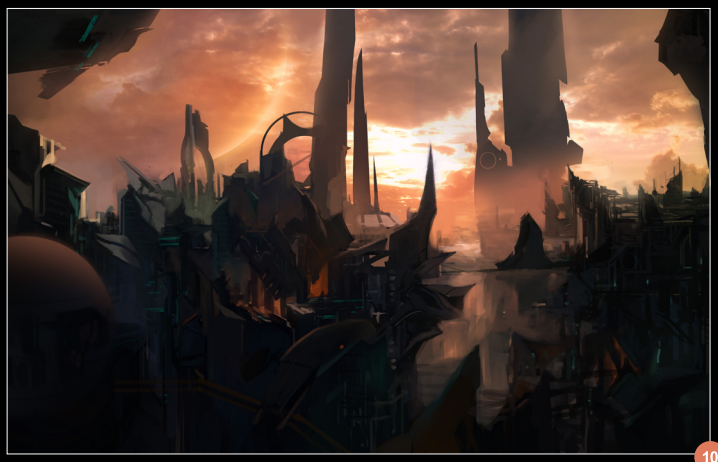
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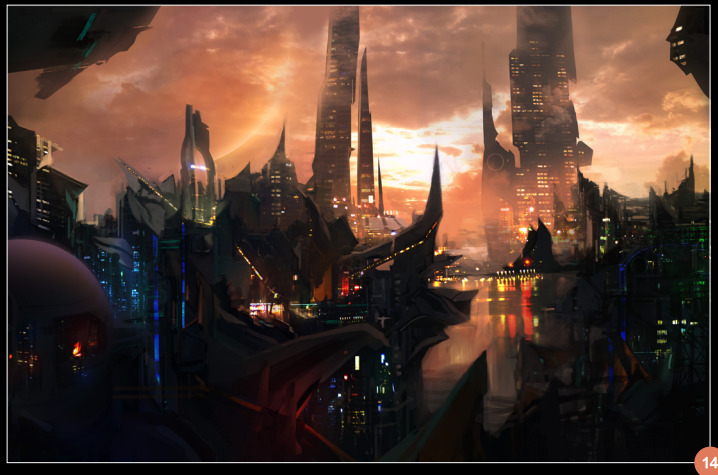
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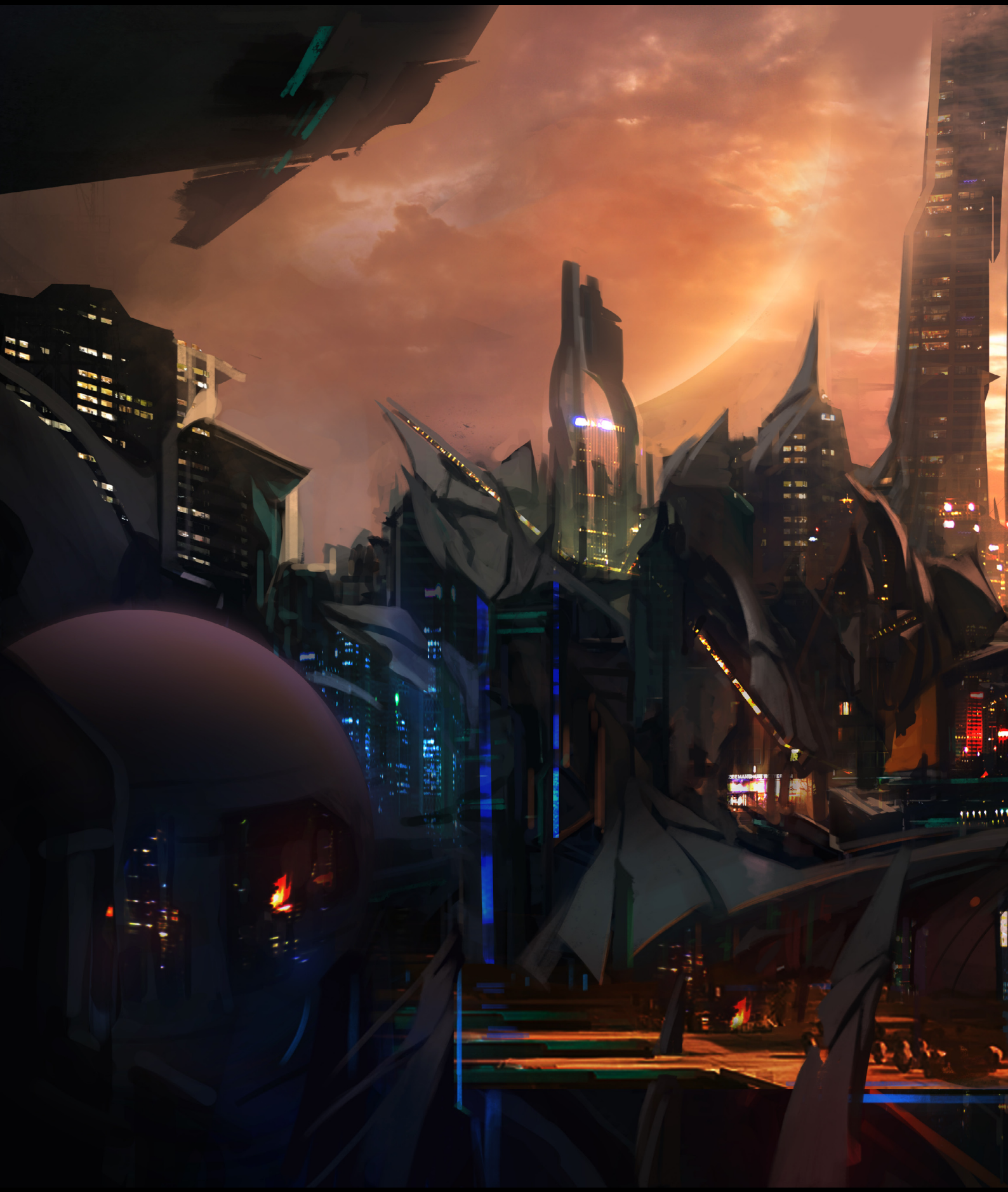
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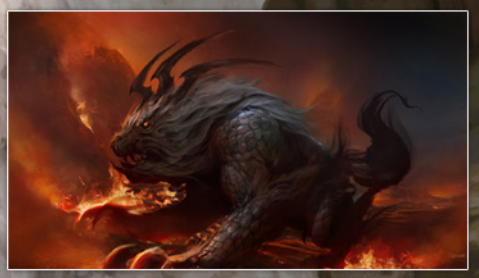


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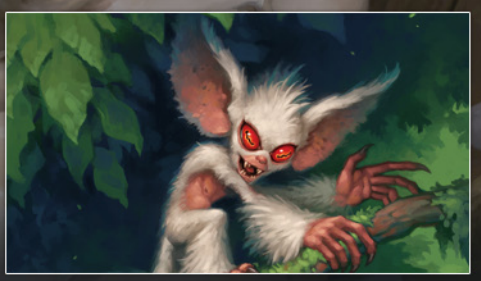












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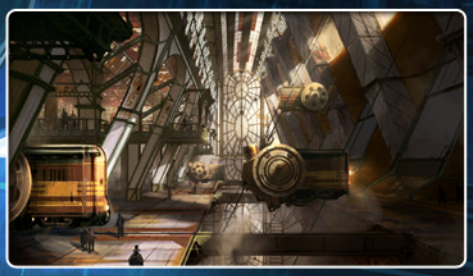


This eBook series will be split over six separate chapters all of which will be dedicated to painting monsters suited to a range of habitats spanning jungle and aquatic to mountainous and subterranean. Each will be covered by a different author who will discuss their approach to digital /concept painting, the tools and brushes they employ and how to create a final image. We shall gain an insight into the thought processes of each of our industry professionals and the ways in which they develop an idea from concept sketches through to a finished work.

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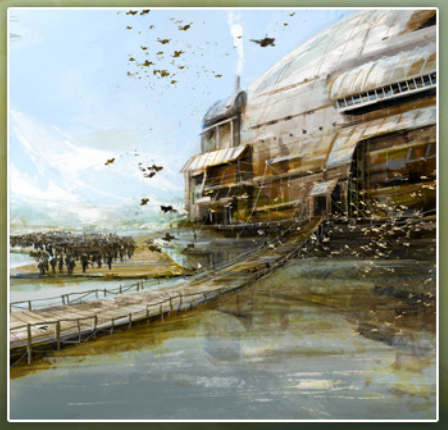
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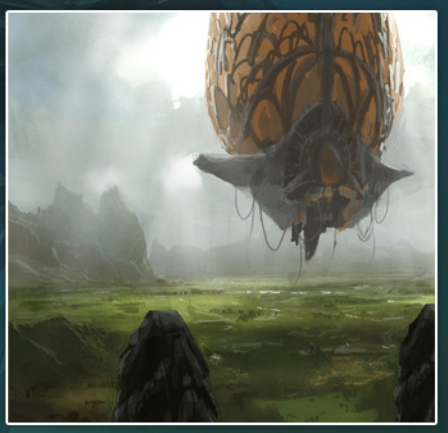
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